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BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTICES

The United States and Mexico, 1821-1848. A History of the Relations between the Two Countries from the Independence of Mexico to the Close of the War with the United States. By George Lockhart Rives. In two volumes. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913. Pp. x, 720; viii, 726.)¹

For the purpose of this review these dignified volumes may be considered under four topics: (1) the political history of Mexico, 1821-1848; (2) the revolution and subsequent annexation of Texas; (3) the diplomatic history of the period; and (4) the political and military history of the Mexican War. Source material for all except the first of these topics has been published in unusual fullness in numerous congressional documents, and thanks to the Mexican habit of including liberal documentary appendices in their histories this has been considerably supplemented from the other side; Reeves² and Adams³ have traced the intricate diplomacy of the period through the archives of the United States, England (with a glimpse into France), and the republic of Texas; Dr. Smith⁴ has studied with extraordinary minuteness the wide ramifications of Texan annexation; and during the past fifteen years a host of unpretentious monographs have appeared on various phases of the subject. Obviously the opportunity for an original contribution to the field lay in the exploitation of the Mexican archives. Mr. Rives has used those of the foreign office to good effect, but other departmental archives have been neglected, although those of *guerra y marina* might be expected to shed a good deal of light on the military history of the war. No important printed material has escaped his survey, and he has tracked Reeves and Adams through the American and British collections, gleaning here and there a new item or a new point of view. In the assimila-

¹This review is reprinted from the *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, June, 1914.

²Reeves, J. S., *American Diplomacy under Tyler and Polk*. Baltimore. 1907.

³Adams, E. D., *British Interests and Activities in Texas, 1838-1846*. Baltimore. 1910.

⁴Smith, J. H., *The Annexation of Texas*. New York. 1911.

tion and presentation of his material he has been assisted by excellent judgment and a singularly lucid historical style.

To the first and fourth topics mentioned above Mr. Rives has added little that is new, but his work was well worth doing. Heretofore the only adequate account of the troubled politics of the first quarter-century of Mexican independence has been Bancroft's somewhat sprawling volumes, and this clean-cut digest, comprising about one-seventh of the book, will be welcome to the general reader, whose interest in Mexico has been stimulated by recent events, and to college classes touching this portion of American history. Similarly, the only comprehensive military history of the Mexican War has been Ripley's two volumes, published in 1849, and now rare and expensive. For these Rives's second volume forms a satisfactory substitute. The second and third topics occupy roughly one-half—and much the better half—of the book. Despatches from Murphy at London, Garro at Paris, and Almonte at Washington to the Mexican foreign office do much to illuminate the inter-related diplomacy of the three principal states, and carefully co-ordinated with the results of monographic studies give to those studies a new force. The pressure of the British government for the recognition of Texas by Mexico; its desire to prevent annexation, and its determination to do so, at the cost of war if necessary, provided France would assist; its determination to avoid war, without that assistance—withstanding the tentative bribe of California offered by Mexico—are all clearer than before. And Chapter XXIII is the best statement yet available of the relations between the United States and Mexico following the annexation treaty—made so largely by the use of Almonte's despatches, showing the earnest efforts of the United States to conciliate Mexico.

The author's conclusions on certain disputed points are worthy of statement: (1) he thinks that while President Jackson was far from being an impartial spectator of the Texas revolution, he had a high sense of the dignity and honor of the United States and did what he could to fulfill the neutral obligations of his government. "The bullying methods" which he employed in pushing pecuniary claims against Mexico "were the subject of just criticism," but he had followed substantially the same methods with France, and it seems more reasonable to consider them the result

of genuine indignation "than as part of a complicated plot." (2) Texas was the real issue in the election of 1844, and Polk's election was due "to the Western spirit of expansion, which was unwilling to put bounds to the growth of the nation, and therefore welcomed annexation." (3) Neither Polk nor the South in 1846 desired to force a war on Mexico, and the order which carried General Taylor to the Rio Grande was merely a measure of reasonable precaution. Certain inaccurate minutiae will reward the critical eye: it is now pretty well established that both Coronado and De Soto entered Texas (I, 3). The powers of Albert Gallatin were unequal to the task of convincing the British government that the Florida treaty gave us a clear title "even to the Pacific," though Mr. Rives makes the assertion without argument (I, 25). General Mier y Terán seems to have been responsible for the idea and the substance of the law of April 6, 1830, closing Texas to Anglo-American immigration (I, 195), though Alaman forced it through Congress. The population of Texas in 1830 was nearer ten than twenty thousand (I, 182), and a number of other unimportant inaccuracies in local Texas history could be catalogued. Butler probably deceived himself as well as Jackson in the hope of ultimately purchasing Texas (I, 247). He had all the promoter's optimism—and all the promoter's interest in the stake. The "abundance" of money which the Texan commissioners obtained in the United States in 1836 (I, 365) was less than one hundred thousand dollars. And one should like some citations for the assertion that in 1844 the Whigs were not severely opposed to annexation (I, 691). More serious is the feeling that Mr. Rives has confined his study too closely to the relations of governments and has considered too little the people. One finds it hard to realize, of course, that there is a Mexican people, but it is perfectly true, nevertheless, that popular opinion, skillfully manipulated, has generally exercised a considerable influence over the government. Except for a few references to the *Diario del Gobierno* and one to *El Sol*, Mexican newspapers have been entirely neglected, and the draft on such sources in the United States has not been heavy. One suspects, too, that the War Department archives at Washington and Mexico would have repaid inspection. In particular, one feels that those of Mexico might help to settle the question of Santa Anna's motives in marching to Buena

Vista (II, 341). Perhaps Mr. Rives was under no obligation to explore these collections in which the chaff so greatly out-bulks the grain, but he has done so well what he has done that one cannot repress the wish that he had done more. The index deserves a sentence of praise; it is excellent.

EUGENE C. BARKER.

Guide to the Materials for the History of the United States in the Principal Archives of Mexico. By Herbert E. Bolton, Ph. D., Professor of American History, University of California. (Washington: The Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1913. Pp. xv, 553.¹)

Mingled with the satisfaction felt in welcoming each new *Guide* published by the Carnegie Institution through its Department of Historical Research is a feeling of regret that Professor Bolton's substantial volume has fallen upon such troublous times. His task has been that of a veritable pioneer, achieved midst difficulties such as beset no similar undertaking. Our natural impulse is to praise the results accomplished and to express the hope that recent political disturbances have not vitiated them to any appreciable degree.

At the outset the author devotes a few pages to describing the conditions under which he worked and to necessary acknowledgments and explanations. He defines many of the technical terms used, and notes such practical points as working hours and climatic conditions. He then divides the archives of the country into two classes, those located in Mexico City and those outside, devoting to the former a little over four times the space given the latter. No one reasonably acquainted with the field will quarrel with him over this division. Many who may never see Mexico will appreciate the succinct historical sketches of the principal archives, as well as the appendix containing convenient lists of viceroys, archbishops, bishops and governors. Such hindrances as the lack of suitable manuscript lists or catalogues for even the best repositories, the frequent transfer of material from one archive

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